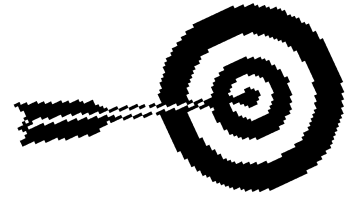


ON TARGET



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PLANNING WELCOMES NEW FACES

The Office of Planning names new Administrator.

Mr. Joe Palladi, previously the State Urban Design Engineer, will assume responsibilities for the Office of Planning on June 2nd. Joe Palladi is a career GDOT employee.

He graduated from Georgia Tech with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Civil Engineering in December 1974. Joe has 28 years of experience with the Georgia Department of Transportation beginning his career as a Civil Engineer in Training and rising to the position of State Urban Design Engineer. He has worked on a wide variety of projects including interchange and intersection designs, bridge replacements, sound barriers, the design and implementation of over 100 lane miles of HOV facilities, and the SR 400 Extension toll way and plaza.

Joe is enthused about his new responsibilities as State Transportation Planning Engineer. He is a proactive person, who believes in good planning and public outreach. The Office of Planning is pleased to welcome Joe.

New Bike Ped Coordinator

Amy Goodwin is the new Statewide Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator. Ms. Goodwin is a graduate of Georgia Institute of Technology with a Master of Science in City Planning. The Bicycle and Pedestrian Program is a very important part of the transportation program and we welcome Amy as the Department's new coordinator and her role in advancing this program. Amy can be reached at 404-657-6692 or amy.goodwin@dot.state.ga.us

DOWNTOWN CONNECTOR: GDOT ADDRESSING TRANSPORTATION NEEDS IN HEART OF ATLANTA

As part of a comprehensive statewide effort to evaluate the current and future conditions of Georgia's Interstate System, there is special attention on the Downtown Connector. This stretch of roadway is a highly utilized corridor that provides key access to major transportation routes for those traveling within the City of Atlanta or through the State of Georgia.

The Department of Transportation is committed to improving the reliability of this significant corridor. The Office of Planning has initiated a study on the Downtown Connector with intentions of implementing improvement measures as soon as possible. The study is being performed in collaboration with numerous entities including key planning partners, affected governments, the local business community, and the general public.

The scope of work includes data collection, defining potential solutions for short, medium, and long term projects, analyzing potential solutions, evaluating the effectiveness of potential solutions, preparing a deployment program for early implementation projects, and preparing project recommendations for short to mid-term projects.

The overall study area will consist of the I-75/85 corridor from south of 10th Street to south of I-20 and along I-20 from Lowery Boulevard to Boulevard. The core study area however consists of the area along I-75/85 north of I-20 through the Williams Street interchange.

Public involvement is a key piece of the study process. The first element of involvement includes the participation of a project steering committee. This committee consists of representatives from key planning partners like the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC), and

the City of Atlanta. The second element of involvement consists of a project stakeholder committee. This committee consists of members of a select group of agencies/organizations such as government agencies, jurisdictional representatives, and corporate entities. The third element of involvement consists of a general public involvement phase where members of the general public can participate.

This project is an example of the Department's commitment to address the immediate transportation needs of the region. Presently, members of the project steering committee are guiding the study as it transitions to final recommendations. As part of the next phases of this project, important stakeholders and the general public will be involved in the planning process. It is the aim of this study to address transportation congestion along this significant corridor and to implement improvement measures as soon as possible. The Department is committed to conducting a thorough evaluation of the study area and to coordinating a collaborative process to obtain high quality results.

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STATE TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM: COMING TO A TOWN NEAR YOU!

The Office of Planning's update of the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) for fiscal years 2004, 2005 and 2006 is underway. The STIP is a three-year document containing federally-funded transportation projects and is updated on an annual basis.

Public involvement is critical to this annual update. In April and May of this year, fourteen public meetings will be held throughout the state to gather public comment on the rural draft STIP. This year numerous meetings are being held in local malls. The dates and locations for these meetings are provided below. It is hoped that this effort will help inform and educate more citizens on the importance of the STIP. The Department welcomes citizens' ideas and comments in preparing the STIP. In addition to the Public Meetings, the Department also meets with local elected officials in each county to solicit their comments and recommendations.

The Department is teaming with the Regional Development Centers to publicize the upcoming public STIP meetings. The Regional Development Centers (RDC) have invited local and elected officials, interested citizens and local media to these meetings. Nearly 6,000 invitations were mailed out and we have placed advertisements in local newspapers announcing the meetings.

As part of the STIP Development

Process, Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) around the state are conducting public meetings to discuss projects in their urbanized areas. Projects included in the MPO's 2004-2006 Transportation Improvement Program will eventually be incorporated into the STIP.

In July, the final Draft STIP including transportation projects for both rural and urban areas will be available for public comment at the Regional Development Centers, the Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO) and the DOT District Offices. The July comment period for the final draft STIP will be announced in local newspapers.

April 7 - Galleria Mall, Centerville
3:00 PM - 7:00 PM

April 8 - DOT District Five Office
Jesup
4:00 PM - 6:00 PM

April 10 - Peachtree Mall, Columbus
3:00 PM - 7:00 PM

April 29 - Adairsville Depot, Adairsville
3:00 PM - 6:00 PM

May 1 - Dallas Chamber of Commerce
Dallas
3:00 PM - 6:00 PM

May 1 - Colonial Mall, Valdosta
10:00 AM - 7:00 PM

May 6 - DOT District One Office
Gainesville
3:00 PM - 7:00 PM

May 6 - Pickens Chamber of Commerce
Jasper
4:00 PM - 6:00 PM

May 6 - Tifton Mall Inc, Tifton
10:00 AM - 7:00 PM

May 8 - Albany Mall, Albany
10:00 AM - 7:00 PM

May 8 - Dublin Mall, Dublin
3:00 PM - 7:00 PM

May 12 - LaGrange Mall, LaGrange
3:00 PM - 7:00 PM

May 14 - Augusta Mall, Augusta
9:00 AM - 9:00 PM

May 15 - Colonial Mall, Macon
3:00 PM - 7:00 PM

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AERIAL CONGESTION SURVEYS FOR CENTRAL GEORGIA

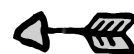
In October 2002, the Office of Planning initiated a consultant contract to document current levels of congestion in the following cities in central Georgia: Columbus, Macon, Warner Robins, Augusta and Savannah. The consultant, Skycomp Inc. based in Maryland, has developed a process for conducting aerial photographic surveys of major highways within a designated study area during peak travel periods. The aerial photography is analyzed and used to calculate a level-of-service for each of the surveyed highways.

The information from the study will be arranged into an interactive collection of photographs, maps, text and charts in a CD-ROM format. This format is very effective in promoting communication and understanding between technical and non-technical audiences.

The information can be used by the Department, local governments, and Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs)

to identify existing congestion conditions in an easy to understand, visual format. Once the survey is complete, the information will be provided to each of the MPOs in the Central Georgia Planning Branch for their use in transportation planning. The survey and analysis will be complete by July 2003 and repeated every three years in order to document changes in congestion.

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NEW MPOs HELPING STATE KEEP PACE WITH GROWTH

In the Fall 2002 edition of On Target, the Article "State Growth Creates New Urban Areas" talked about Georgia's four new urbanized areas designated by the 2000 Census. Each of the four new urbanized areas has designated an entity to serve as their Metropolitan Planning Organization. Dalton, Gainesville and Valdosta have received approval of their MPO designation from Governor Perdue. Hinesville's MPO designation was recently submitted to the Governor's Office and is awaiting action by the Governor.

The Governor has approved the North Georgia Regional Development Center to serve as the MPO for the Dalton Urbanized Area; Hall County Planning Department to serve as the MPO for the Gainesville Urbanized Area and South Georgia Regional Development Center to serve as the MPO for the Valdosta Urbanized Area. Approval is pending for the City of Hinesville to serve as the MPO for the Hinesville Urbanized Area. Each of these designated MPOs met the minimum requirements necessary for an MPO. A designated MPO must be capable of doing transportation planning and must be able to receive and expend federal funds. The MPO will serve as the technical and administrative staff for the Policy Committee. The Policy Committee is the decision making body of the MPO. Members of this committee usually include a representative from each of the local governments that are part of the MPO planning area, the commissioner of the Georgia Department of Transportation or his

representative, as well as a representative of the citizen transportation committee.

The Department will work closely in each of these areas assisting the new MPOs in establishing a planning process in accordance with federal regulations. Developing a planning process will be a cooperative effort between the new MPO, the Department and FHWA. The MPOs will have over two years to become fully functional. By October 1, 2005, MPOs should have developed their planning process, including developing committee structure, urbanize area planning boundaries, a Unified Planning Work Program, bylaws, a Long Range Transportation Plan and a Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

To expedite the development of the planning process, GDOT will hire a consultant to assist the Dalton, Hinesville and Valdosta MPOs in meeting the federal requirement. A contract is expected to be awarded in late May and the contract is expected to last eighteen months. Assistance for Gainesville will be handled under an existing consultant contract. Working together, we expect to meet all the scheduled deadlines for establishing a new planning process in the State's new MPOs.

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DALTON-WHITFIELD COUNTY TRANSPORTATION STUDY

The Dalton-Whitfield County Transportation Study is near completion. Major accomplishments have been met as result of enthusiastic and proactive community support from local citizens, governmental officials in the city of Dalton and Whitfield County, Georgia DOT and the firm of Greenhorne & O'Mara.

The community and other participants were active in both phases of the study. During phase I, goals and objectives were established, existing and future transportation conditions were examined and highways, airport access, bike and pedestrian facilities, public transit and railways deficiencies were identified. During phase II, improvements were identified to address deficiencies identified in Phase I.

A proposed transit plan was developed by the firm of Tunnel Spangler in a January 2003 study and incorporated in this study. The plan consists of a series of four routes radiating out from a downtown transfer center to major outlying activity center destinations.

Proposed bicycle and pedestrian alternatives were developed by the Advisory Group and incorporated in this study, including additional routes, new locations, extensions and multi-use paths. Sidewalk and bicycle improvements were identified to improve pedestrian safety and access to major community generators.

The completion of the study will be just in time for the new MPO to take the recommendations from this study to another

level by incorporating them into their 2025 year Long Range Transportation Plan. Recently North Georgia Regional Development Center (NGRDC) was officially designated as a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Dalton-Whitfield County area. The results of the study and existing transportation planning by NGRDC will serve as the starting point for the new MPO's long range planning.

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STATE AIR QUALITY PARTNERS ISSUE CALL FOR CMAQ PROJECTS

The Georgia Department of Transportation on behalf of the State Air Quality Partners, GRTA, EPD and GDOT, will in June 2003 begin accepting applications for Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) projects in the Atlanta non-attainment area. Additional information on this call for CMAQ projects, including a copy of the application, will soon be available on the Office of Planning web site at: <http://www.dot.state.ga.us/DOT/planning/index.shtml>

HOV STRATEGIC IMPLEMENTATION PLAN COMPLETED

After 18 months of intensive study, the HOV Strategic Implementation Plan final recommendations were presented to Stakeholders on March 18, 2003. These recommendations included proposed extensions to the existing system, methods to improve the enforcement and operation of the expanded system and a financial plan.

The final plan covers a range of recommendations for the future of the HOV system in Atlanta. Foremost is the recommendation to construct a barrier separated system where feasible and prudent. A barrier separated system will improve the safety and efficiency of HOV operations for years to come. The system will include a provision of direct access ramps to the newly constructed HOV lanes which will provide significant time savings to transit systems, van pools and carpools. The plan recommends specific projects for expanding the system, including access locations as well as locations for future park and ride lots to facilitate use of the system.

Recommendations for enforcement and operation of the system cover a wide

range of options. These include design recommendations to provide for safe locations for law enforcement activities and working with our partners at the Department of Motor Vehicles to improve fining and tracking of HOV lane violators. The final segment of the strategic plan addressed funding options based on a comprehensive evaluation of financial mechanisms being utilized throughout the United States.

The executive summary for the strategic implementation plan is available on the GDOT website at <http://www.dot.state.ga.us/DOT/plan-prog/planning/studies/hov/index.shtml>. The executive summary includes a list of projects grouped by tiers to reflect construction priorities for the HOV system in the Atlanta area. The final documentation for the HOV Strategic Implementation Plan will be made available on CD upon request.

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On Target is a quarterly publication of the Georgia Department of Transportation's Office of Planning.

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